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CAPT. McCALLA'S TESTIMONY

EXPERIENCE OFF CIENFUEGOS AND SANTIAGO.

Relates Conversations With Commander-in-Chief of the Flying Squadron.

During the last hour of the session of the Schley court of inquiry yesterday afternoon Captain Bowman H. McCalla, who was in command of the Marblehead during the war with Spain, was on the stand. His testimony dealt with the delivery of dispatches from Admiral Sampson to Commodore Schley and related to conversations with the latter.

Captain McCalla gave in detail his part in arranging a code of signals with the Cuban insurgents, and his communications with them near Cienfuegos on May 24, 1898, when it was learned definitely that Cervera's fleet was not in the harbor there. He said that Captain Chadwick, who was Admiral Sampson's chief of staff, was the only person at Key West to whom he had communicated the signal code. Captain McCalla expressed the opinion that coal-

ing was feasible off Santiago at the time Schley began his retrograde movement.

Captain McCalla had first come into contact with the flying squadron May 19, 1898, when he was proceeding from the south coast of Cuba to Key West. He met the squadron on its way to Cuba. Witness said he had not been asked to go aboard the Brooklyn for the purpose of making a report on conditions in Cuba, but had made a full report to Captain Chadwick. Admiral Sampson's chief of staff, when he arrived at Key West. On this point he said:

McCalla's Code of Signals.

"In addition to written reports on dispatches which I carried, I explained to the chief of staff the secret code which I had established with the Cubans near Cienfuegos. That was not done until I heard that Commodore Schley was proceeding to Cienfuegos."

Q. "What was that secret code, briefly?"

A. "On the 15th and 16th of May, 1898, I had been in communication with three Cuban officers and two privates on the Marblehead, and I had arranged with Lieutenant Lavarez, who spoke English very well, a system of signals in case they wished to communicate with the Marblehead or my force. There were to be three horizontal lights at night and three horses in line on the beach by day."

Q. "To whom according to the best of your recollection, did you communicate that secret code of signals?"

A. "Only to Capt. Chadwick, chief of staff."

Q. "Did you make any written report respecting those signals?"

A. "Never. It was a secret code arranged by myself, and I did not wish any publicity to be given this code, because the Cubans might be betrayed by any publicity which would reach the Spanish government in Havana."

Q. "Did you have any fear of betrayal of our own force in like manner?"

A. "I thought that was possible, of course; that was in my mind at the time."

Q. "How long after you reached Key West before you made that communication to the chief of staff?"

A. "So soon as I reached the flagship and found that the flying squadron had been directed to Cienfuegos on the 24th of May with dispatches for Admiral Schley. He said: 'It had been reported authoritatively in Key West on the 19th of May and when I sailed on the afternoon of the 21st of May that the Spanish squadron was at Santiago.'"

Q. "And you communicated that information to Commodore Schley verbally?"

A. "Commodore Schley told me he thought the Spanish fleet was at Cienfuegos; that he had received newspapers from the steamer Adula some days previous; that one of the newspapers contained a cable dispatch from Santiago, and from that he gathered that the Spanish force under Admiral Cervera might have sailed from Santiago in time to reach Cienfuegos just before the arrival of the force under his command. I said that I had brought arms, ammunition and dynamite for the Cuban camp to the westward, and that if he would let me go I would find out at once whether they were in Cienfuegos. He immediately assented. I asked him if he had seen any lights on the beach. He said he had. I asked him if he saw three horses in line on the beach by day."

McCalla's Discovery.

Capt. McCalla then related how he had gone ashore near Cienfuegos and found the Cubans drawn up in line. He gave them food and ammunition. "We found," he added, "that Cervera was not inside the harbor, and that, in fact, the situation in Cienfuegos was exactly as it was when I left it on the 16th of the same month."

Capt. McCalla said he sent the information obtained to Admiral Schley by the Eagle, and that he proceeded at full speed and report to the Brooklyn that Cervera was not in Cienfuegos. At that time witness was steaming with only two boilers, and the Eagle could steam faster than the Marblehead.

Q. "Did you consider that information as of urgent importance then?"

A. "I considered it of great importance."

Q. "Then what did you do?"

A. "We followed with the Marblehead, reaching the Brooklyn between 3 and 4 o'clock, somewhat behind the Eagle."

Q. "Did you go on board the Brooklyn?"

A. "I steamed under the quarter of the Brooklyn, and after some conversation with Commodore Schley I asked if he would like me to go on board. He said that he would. I went on board and of course confirmed the fact that Admiral Cervera's fleet was not in Cienfuegos. I saw then for the first time the set of instructions for Commodore Schley. During the conversation the commodore asked me to read the instructions and after I had read them he asked me what I thought he had better do. Previous to this he had said that he could not coal off Santiago; that the English had demonstrated that ships could not coal at sea. He also said that if he returned to Key West he would be court-martialed.

A. "While I was in the cabin of the Brooklyn. The interview lasted perhaps half an hour. Captain Cook either came in frequently or remained the whole time. Lieutenant Sears came in once."

Q. "I assume you do not recollect whether any of those gentlemen were present when I said 'I cannot say?'"

A. "Did you hear any reports or remarks, conversational or otherwise?"

A. "While I was in the flag lieutenant, I think, came in twice to report sig-

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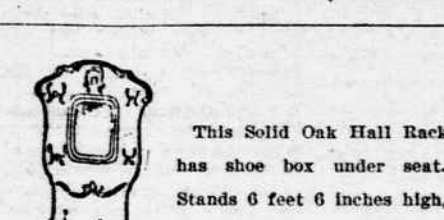
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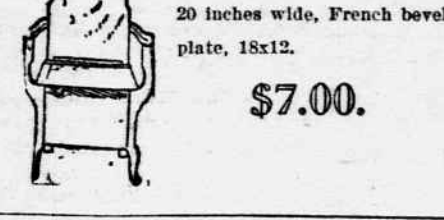
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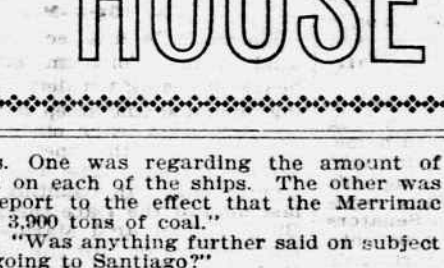
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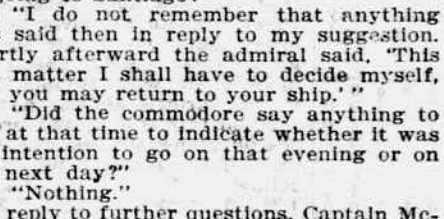
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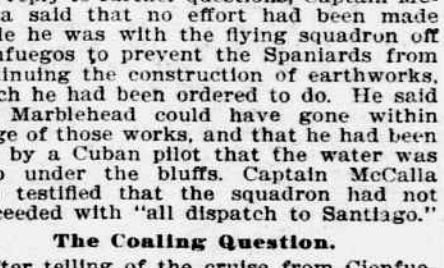
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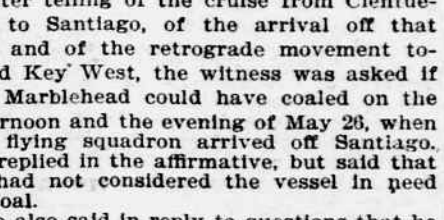
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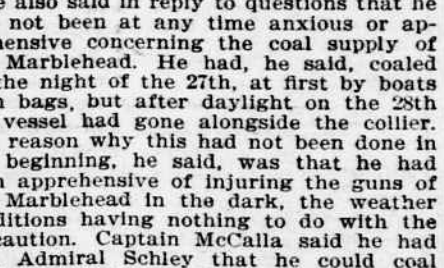
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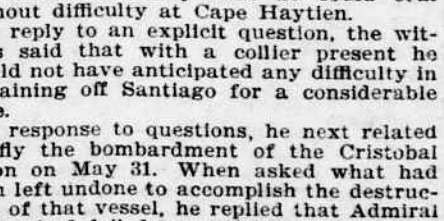
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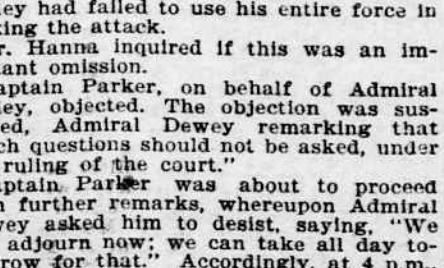
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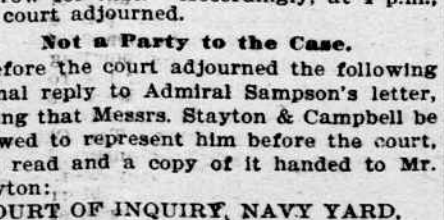
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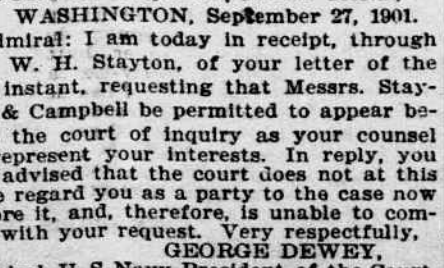
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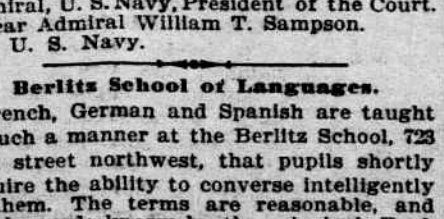
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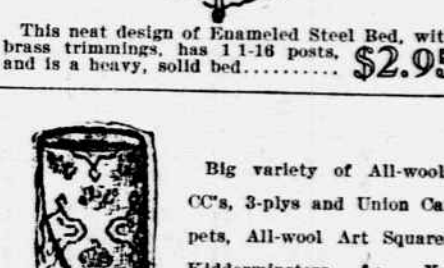
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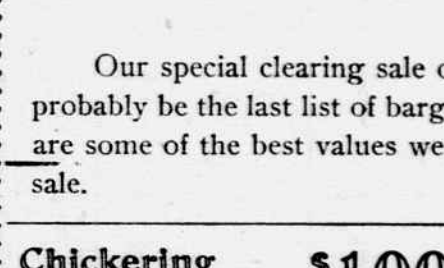
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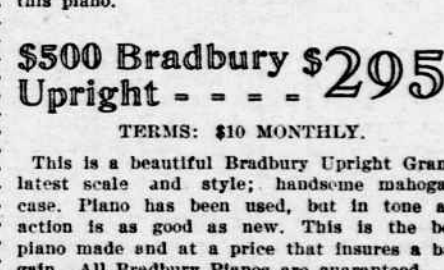
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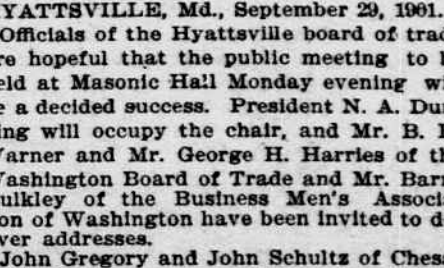
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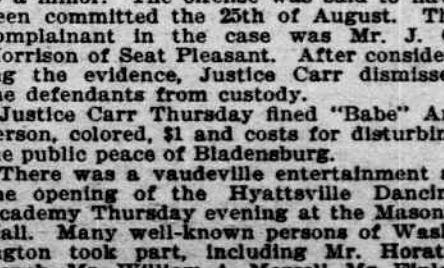
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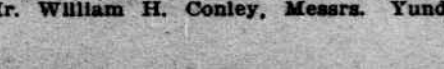
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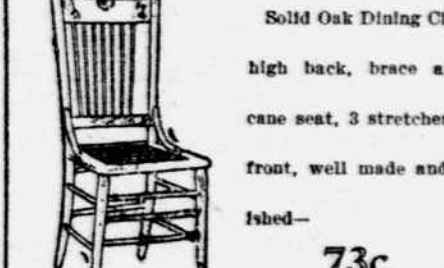
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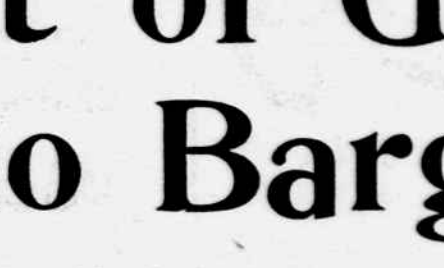
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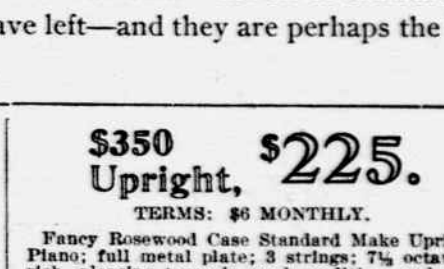
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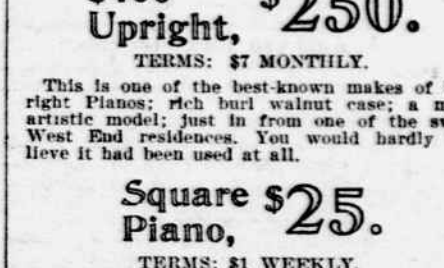
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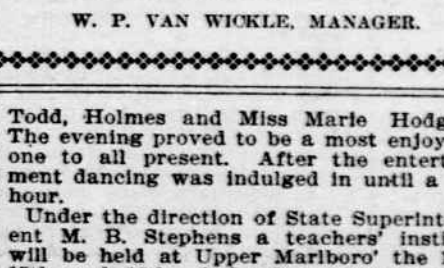
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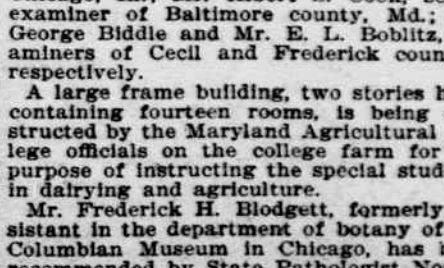
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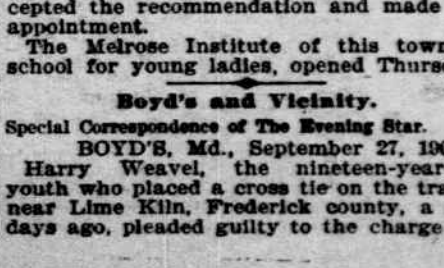
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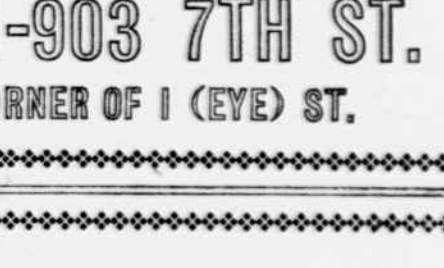
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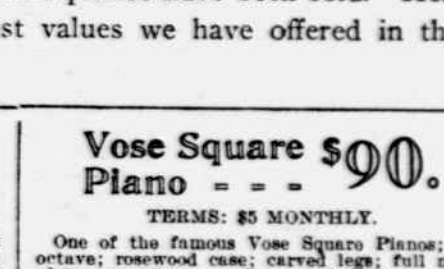
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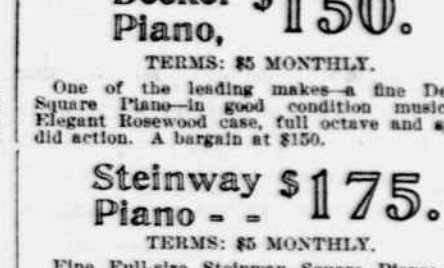
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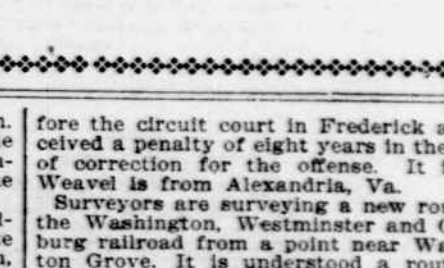
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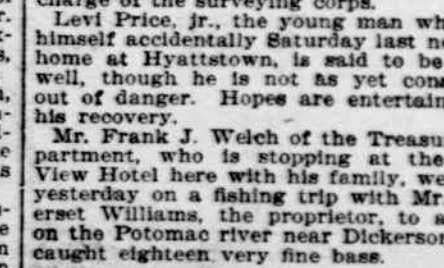
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